

GROUNDBREAKING AT THE
FEBRUARY 26, 1963



NEW YORK WORLD'S FAIR 1964 - 1965
FIRST NATIONAL CITY BANK



Following is a transcription of remarks by First National City Bank and World's Fair officials at the First National City Bank groundbreaking ceremony, New York World's Fair, Tuesday, February 26, 1963.

MR. ERWIN WITT [NEW YORK WORLD'S FAIR COMPTROLLER]: Mr. Perkins, Mr. Moses and gentlemen of the First National City Bank, of the Fair and friends: it's a pleasure to welcome the First National City Bank as not only an exhibitor but a participant in the Fair. This bank has been an old friend of a great many of us, and we are really gratified to have them with us. Mr. Perkins, the chairman of the Executive Committee of First

National City Bank, has a few words to say. Mr. Perkins.

RICHARD S. PERKINS: We are all delighted to be here and to participate in this groundbreaking ceremony, and to have the opportunity to see this magnificent exhibition of what the World's Fair really amounts to.

I was just saying to Mr. Moses that all these buildings running from \$50 million down are most impressive. While we look small in relation to this, our objective is to make a big contribution by providing the Fair with top-notch banking facilities.

Essentially we are a service organization. We try to take care of people of substantial means, and people of very moderate means, and here we are attempting to perform a service for the Fair organization, and also on top of that we are going to be exhibitors. Ours is an international institution which fits in with the international aspect of

Cover: Rendering of First National City Bank's service branch at the Fair site. The steel, glass and brick structure will be surrounded by pools, paved walks, birch and magnolia trees. Architect: William Lescaze. Contractor: Diesel Construction Co.



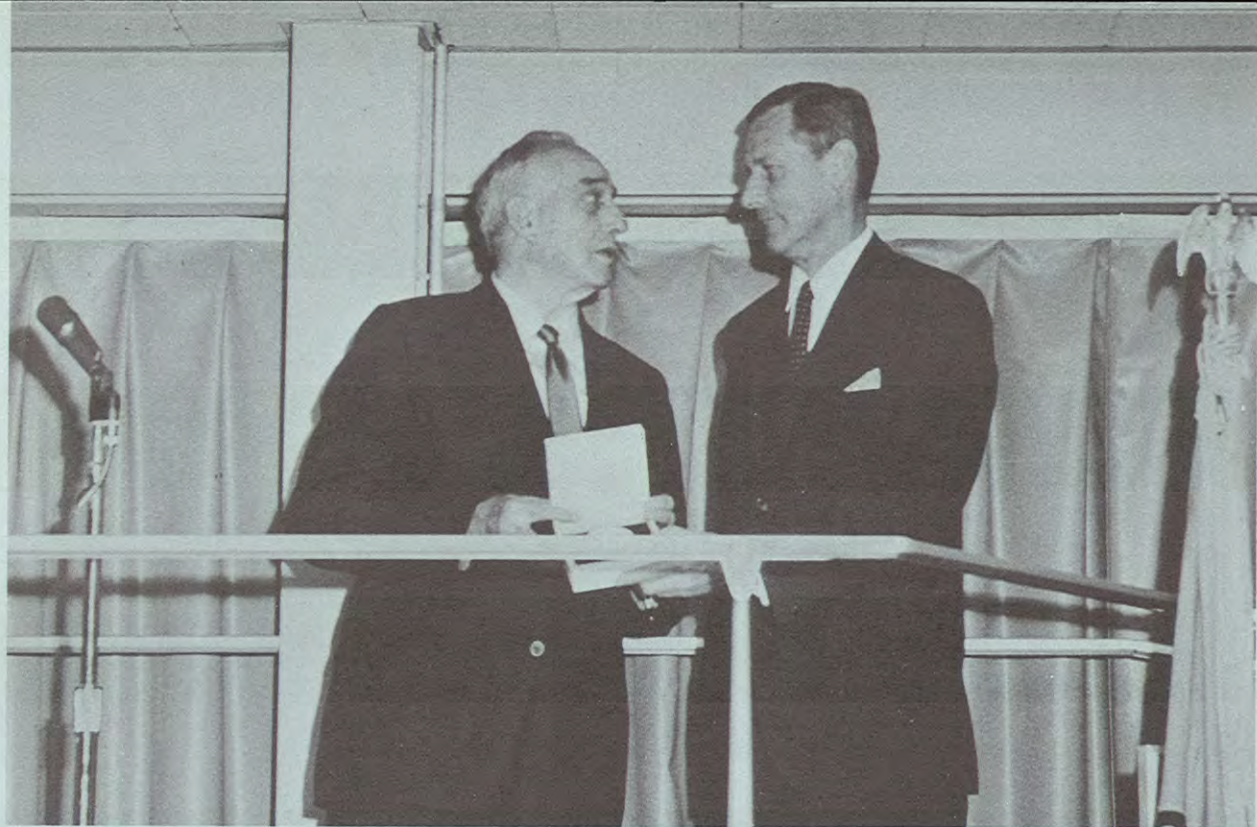
Turning earth for First National City Bank are, left to right: Duck-Nam Song, secretary to the governor of the Korean Reconstruction Bank in Seoul; Robert G. Ehrnrooth, trainee Foreningsbanken, Helsinki, Finland; Thomas R. Wilcox, executive vice president Metropolitan Division First National City Bank; Richard S. Perkins, chairman of the Executive Committee; Robert Moses, Fair president; Alfredo Ossa, member of First National City Bank's Legal Department, Santiago, Chile; Jacques deBroissia, trainee from First National City Bank's Paris Branch.

the Fair. Forty-nine years ago we opened up our first branch in Buenos Aires, and since that time we have increased our coverage so that at present we have ninety-one branches in thirty-two countries. So I think with that network we'll have some impact on attracting people to the Fair, and on behalf of Tom Wilcox and my other associates here, I would like to say that we are impressed with what we see — we would like to congratulate you, Mr. Moses, and your associates on the imagination and planning that you have put into this project. These things don't just happen. We think that you have done a magnificent job.

MR. ROBERT MOSES [PRESIDENT, NEW YORK WORLD'S FAIR]: Thank you Mr. Perkins. Mr. Perkins is quite right. These things don't just happen. This area has a long, checkered and somewhat dramatic history. I was pointing out to some people the other day that

wanted to get a good picture by an artist who knew how to write, that the best description of the old Flushing Meadow and of the old dump that stood in the center there, is in the *Great Gatsby*. And Scott Fitzgerald did himself proud in telling about that. That's where the main action of probably the best short story ever written in this country took place.

When I first looked it over we were planning to build the first parkway in part financed by the state, within the limits of New York City. It had been the tradition in New York not to spend any money on parkways and expressways in the city, but to let the city people pay for a substantial part of the work up state. That was one of the things that griped Governor Smith, and led him to advocate building the Grand Central Parkway. Theoretically we should have levelled the dump and made a park out of it and put a parkway through it. We didn't have enough money for that.



Robert Moses, Fair president and Richard S. Perkins, chairman of the Executive Committee of First National City Bank, shown in the Fair's model room holding the Fair's official medallion which was presented to Mr. Perkins during the First National City Bank groundbreaking ceremony.

So we planned to go through the middle of this great ash dump, forty to fifty feet high, which represented the off-scourings of Brooklyn for a period of some thirty-five or forty years. It had just been dumped there, and it got higher and higher. There were fires burning there perpetually, and there were rats so big that Track Mannigan, who was one of the original contractors, said they put saddles on them. I don't know whether they did or not, but they were big rats.

And we levelled the dump and filled up the tortuous streams that ran through Flushing Meadow, but you'll have to keep in mind that the dump is still there, in the sense that it's underground, and that it does not afford a very fine foundation for buildings. That's one of many reasons why building anything permanent in this area is a very expensive business.

As to the Fair itself, all modern fairs have the same theme which is something in the nature of peace through

friendship, and open competition — inviting nations to bring their best products — and that of course is the theme of this Fair. Just like the shields of all the colleges are always praying for truth and light, and personally I like to get away from that a little bit, and I like to think of this in the terms of Mr. Perkins' touchdown, as a sort of a worldwide competitive thing. Like the Olympic games where you invite the best athletes to come around and see who wins.

And there isn't any protocol, it's not states craft, it's not states departments, it's not diplomacy. Some of us as you may know really don't have the qualifications to be diplomats, but we do perhaps have some qualifications for getting things done. That's what we are aiming at here.

Now this is a great bank, a great institution all over the world. It's progressive, it reaches out, and it has a great deal to do — we have not only our big industries here which know how to exhibit and put their best feet for-

ward, and the states which are fairly familiar with this sort of thing — the United States government and city — but we have these foreign countries, many of which are new, ambitious, sensitive and proud, but don't have much in the way of experience and have very little money.

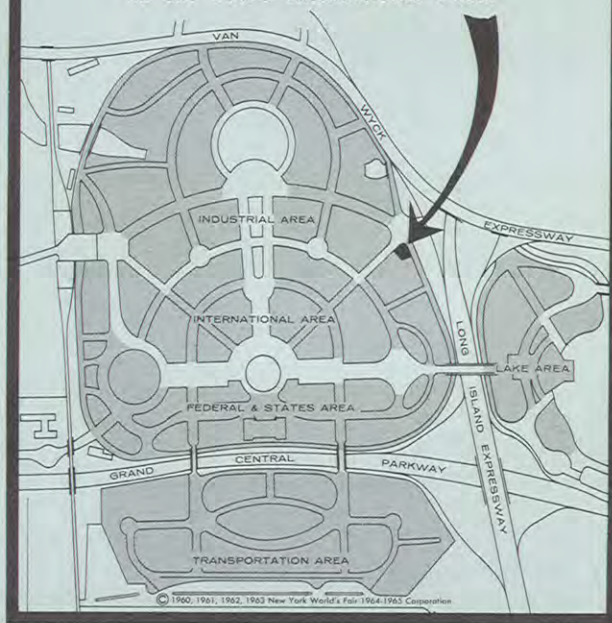
And Charlie Poletti has been making a terrific effort to get them into this Fair. We've gone way out of our way to bring them in, and to reassure them, and tell them that the great difficulties they anticipate are not going to occur.

A great bank like yours can do a great deal to help us in this context. We are not exactly missionaries, but we are not in this business of the Fair for profit either, and we expect to pay back what's involved, pay all our debts, and have enough money left to finish the permanent park.

Now we are delighted that you are here, not only as the sole and only bank, but also because of your international connections. I want to give this to Mr. Perkins as a symbol. I hope he'll keep it on his desk at the bank.

FIRST NATIONAL CITY BANK

will occupy an 11,993 sq. ft. site
in the Fair's International Area.





FIRST NATIONAL CITY BANK

RICHARD S. PERKINS, *Chairman of the Executive Committee*
THOMAS R. WILCOX, *Executive Vice President, Metropolitan Division*
JOHN E. THILLY, *Senior Vice President, Metropolitan Division*
JOSEPH D. FARRELL, *Vice President and Group Supervisor of Branches*
ROBERT F. BURNS, *Manager, World's Fair Branch*

NEW YORK WORLD'S FAIR 1964-1965 CORPORATION

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UNISPHERE

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